NUMB. CLXII.

The SPECTATOR.

Ipſe dies agitat feſtos: Fuſuſque per herbam,
Ignis ubi in medio & Socii cratera coronant,
Te libans, Lenæe, vocat: pecoriſque magiſtris
Velocis Jaculi certamina ponit in ulmo,
Corporaque agreſti nudat prædura Palæſtra.
Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
Hanc Remus & Frater: Sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet & rerum facta eſt pulcherrima Roma. Virg. G. 2.

Tueſday, September 4. 1711.

I Am glad that my late going into the Country has encreaſed the Number of my Correſpondents, one of whom ſends me the following Letter.

SIR,

'THough you are pleaſed to retire from us ſo 'ſoon into the City, I hope you will not 'think the Affairs of the Country altogether unworthy of your Inſpection for the future. I had the Honour of ſeeing your ſhort Face at Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY's, and have ever ſince thought your Perſon and Writings both extraordinary; had you ſtayed there a few Days longer you would have ſeen a Country *Wake*, which you know in moſt Parts of *England* is the *Eve-Feaſt of the Dedication of our Churches*. I was laſt Week at one of theſe Aſſemblies, which was held in a neighbouring Pariſh; where I found their *Green* covered with a promiſcuous Multitude of all Ages and both Sexes, who eſteem one another more or leſs the following Part of the Year according as they diſtinguiſh themſelves at this Time. The whole Company were in their Holy-day Cloaths, and divided into ſeveral Parties, all of them endeavouring to ſhew themſelves in thoſe Exerciſes wherein they excelled, and to gain the Approbation of the Lookers on.

'I found a Ring of Cudgel-Players, who were breaking one another's Heads in order to make ſome Impreſſion on their Miſtreſſes Hearts. I obſerved a luſty young Fellow who had the Misfortune of a broken Pate, but what conſiderably added to the Anguiſh of the Wound, was his over-hearing an old Man who ſhook his Head and ſaid, *That he queſtioned now if black* Kate *could marry him theſe three Years*. I was diverted from a further Obſervation of theſe Combatants, by a Foot-ball Match which was on the other Side of the *Green*; where *Tom. Short* behaved himſelf ſo well, that moſt People ſeemed to agree *it was impoſſible he ſhould remain a Batchelour till the next Wake*. Having played many a Match my ſelf, I could have looked longer on this Sport, had I not obſerved a Country Girl who was poſted on an Eminence at ſome Diſtance from me, and was making ſo many odd Grimaces, and writhing and diſtorting her whole Body in ſo ſtrange a Manner, as made me very deſirous to know the Meaning of it. Upon my coming up to her, I found that ſhe was over-looking a Ring of Wreſtlers, and that her Sweet-heart, a Perſon of ſmall Stature, was contending with an huge brawny Fellow, who twirled him about, and ſhook the little Man ſo violently, that by a ſecret Sympathy of Hearts it produced all thoſe Agitations in the Perſon of his Miſtreſs, who I dare ſay, like *Cælia* in *Shakeſpear* on the ſame Occaſion, could have *wiſhed herſelf inviſible to catch the ſtrong Fellow by the Leg*. The Squire of the Pariſh treats the whole Company every Year with a Hogſhead of Ale; and propoſes a *Beaver-Hat* as a Recompence to him who gives moſt *Falls*. This has raiſed ſuch a Spirit of Emulation in the Youth of the Place, that ſome of them have rendered themſelves very expert at this Exerciſe; and I was often ſurprized to ſee a Fellow's Heels fly up, by a Trip which was given him ſo ſmartly that I could ſcarce diſcern it. I found that the old Wreſtlers ſeldom enter'd the Ring, till ſome one was grown formidable by having thrown two or three of his Opponents; but kept themſelves as it were in a reſerved Body, to defend the *Hat*, which is alwas hung up by the Perſon who gets it in one of the moſt conſpicuous Parts of the Houſe, and ſlooked upon by the whole Family as ſomething redounding much more to their Honour than a Coat of Arms. There was a Fellow who was ſo buſy in regulating all the Ceremonies, and ſeemed to carry ſuch an Air of Importance in

his

his Looks, that I could not help inquiring, who he was; and was immediately answered, *That he did not value himself upon nothing, for that he and his Ancestors had worn so many Hats, that his Parlour looked like a Haberdasher's Shop*: However this Thirst of Glory in them all, was the reason that no one Man stood *Lord of the Ring* for above three *Falls*, while I was amongst them.

'The young Maids, who were not Lookers on at these Exercises, were themselves engaged in some Diversion; and upon my asking a Farmer's Son of my own Parish what he was gazing at with so much Attention, he told me *That he was seeing Betty Welch*, whom I knew to be his Sweetheart, *pitch a Bar*.

'In short, I found the Men endeavour'd to shew the Women they were no Cowards, and that the whole Company strived to recommend themselves to each other, by making it appear that they were all in a perfect State of Health, and fit to undergo any Fatigues of bodily Labour.

'Your Judgment upon this Method of *Love* and *Gallantry*, as it is at present practised amongst us in the Country, will very much oblige,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

If I would here put on the Scholar and Politician, I might inform my Readers how these bodily Exercises or Games were formerly encouraged in all the Common-wealths of *Greece*, from whence the *Romans* afterwards borrow'd their *Pentathlum*, which was compos'd of *Running*, *Wrestling*, *Leaping*, *Throwing*, and *Boxing*, tho' the Prizes were generally nothing but a Crown of Cypress or Parsley, Hats not being in fashion in those Days: That there is an old Statute which obliges every Man in *England*, having such an Estate, to keep and exercise the long Bow; by which Means our Ancestors excelled all other Nations in the use of that Weapon, and we had all the real Advantages, without the Inconvenience of a standing Army: And that I once met with a Book of Projects, in which the Author considering to what noble Ends that Spirit of Emulation, which so remarkably shews it self among our common People in these Wakes, might be directed, proposes that for the Improvement of all our handicraft Trades there should be annual Prizes set up for such Persons as were most excellent in their several Arts. But laying aside all these political Considerations, which might tempt me to pass the Limits of my Paper, I confess the greatest Benefit and Convenience that I can observe in these Country Festivals, is the bringing young People together, and giving them an Opportunity of shewing themselves in the most advantageous Light. A Country Fellow that throws his Rival upon his Back, has generally as good Success with their common Mistress; as nothing is more usual than for a nimble-footed Wench to get a Husband at the same Time she wins a Smock. Love and Marriages are the natural Effects of these anniversary Assemblies. I must therefore very much approve the Method by which my Correspondent tells me each Sex endeavours to recommend it self to the other, since nothing seems more likely to promise a healthy [O]ffspring or a happy Cohabitation. And I believe [I] may assure my Country Friend, that there has be[en] many a Court Lady who would be contented to [ex]change her crazy young Husband for *Tom Shor[e]* and several Men of Quality who would have part[ed] with a tender Yoke-fellow for *Black Kate*.

I am the more pleased with having *Love* made the principal End and Design of these Meetings, as it seems to be most agreeable to the Intent for which they were at first instituted, as we are informed by the learned Dr. *Kennet*, with whose Words I shall conclude my present Paper.

These Wakes, says he, *were in Imitation of the ancient Agapæ or Love-feasts; and were first established in England by Pope* Gregory *the Great, who in an Epistle to* Melitus *the Abbot gave Order that they should be kept in Sheds or Arbories made up with Branches and Boughs of Trees round the Church.*

He adds, *That this laudable Custom of Wakes prevailed for many Ages, till the nice Puritans began to exclaim against it as a Remnant of Popery, and by Degrees the precise Humour grew so popular, that at* Exeter *Assises the Lord Chief Baron* Walter *made an Order for the Suppression of all Wakes; but on* Bishop Laud's *complaining of this innovating Humour, the King commanded the Order to be reversed.*

ERRATA.

In Saturday's Spectator, *Col.* 3. *Line* 31. *for* which did not seem to have been laid for them, *read* which did not seem to lie in their Way. *Col.* 4. *Line* [1] *for* Halfs *read* Parts.

TO BE SOLD.

A House in Soho-Square, four Rooms of a Floor, with Closets, Coach-house, Stables, Laundry. The Gentleman who has the Disposal of it may be heard of at Mr. Lillie's the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings.

For SALE by the CANDLE.

On Thursday the 6th of September, at Garraway's Coffee-house in Exchange-Ally in Cornhill, at 12 to the Noon, (only one Cask or Basket in a Lot) the intire Cargo of a neutral Ship the Emanuel, Biorn Bengson Master, imported from Dieppe, (pursuant to an Act of Parliament made last Sessions) consisting of excellent new French Wines, neat, viz. 41 Feuillettes or half Hogsheads of Burgundy, 4 Baskets containing each 100 Bottles of Champaign, and 64 Hogsheads of true Hermitage, just landed, and now in a Vault near the House of Mr. Tho. Cary, Merchant, in Botolph-lane near Billingsgate: The said Wines are to be seen and tasted this Day and to Morrow, and from 7 to 10 in the Forenoon of the 6th Instant as above. Note, The Buyers are desired to appear punctually at the Hour appointed, determining to compleat the Sale without adjourning. To be sold by Tho. Tomkins, Broker.

The famous Chymical Secret for the Tooth-Ach, a Drop or two of which infallibly and instantly takes away the sharpest Pain, tho' so violent and raging as almost to cause Distraction. It is less than a Minutes time gives ease to admiration, and not only takes the Pain quite away, (whither the Tooth be found or rotten) but also certainly prevents its returning again. Price 2 s. 6 d. a Bottle (which contains enough to cure 20 People,) with Directions. Sold only at Mrs. Bell's, a Bookseller, at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhil near Stocks-Market, where the most infallible Plaister for taking away Corns is Sold at 1 s. a Box, with Directions.

Whereas it has been advertis'd in the Gazette and other Publick Prints, that the Magistrate of Spa near Liege, hath receiv'd Information, that several private Persons have sent into England and other Countries great Quantities of foreign Mineral Waters, under the Denomination of SPA-WATERS, which have neither in Virtue or Qualities: This is therefore to inform the Publick, new Spa-Waters, with an authentick Certificate by the Greffier of Spa, and approv'd by the College of Physicians at Liege, is now imported and sold by Tho Burges Druggest, at the Blue Anchor in Fleet-street, who will henceforward take effectual Care that what he imports shall be fresh and Good.

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